

Message Text

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53-L
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-05 SAJ-01 /064 W
----- 116032

P R 201709Z JUN 75
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0886
INFO USMISSION USBERLIN
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
AMEMBASSY BERLIN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 09988

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PINS, GW
SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENTS IN GERMAN WIRE TAPPING AFFAIR

REF: BONN 9541, STATE 139319

BEGIN SUMMARY: WHILE THERE ARE ANY NUMBER OF RUMORS OR THEORIES ABOUT WHO TAPPED THE OCTOBER 3, 1974 KOHL-BIEDENKOPF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION, NO HARD CLUES HAVE EMERGED. THE EMBASSY DENIAL AND THE OBVIOUS DISCREPANCIES IN THE DOCUMENT SENT TO "STERN" HAVE DISPELLED SUSPICION OF OFFICIAL US INVOLVEMENT. HOWEVER, THE "STERN" DISCLOSURE JUNE 19 THAT THE MAGAZINE HAD RECEIVED A LETTER FROM A "PRIVATE INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION" BASED IN COLORADO, CALLING ITSELF "THE INTELLIGENCE TECHNICAL TRAINING CENTER OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE," WHICH CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE KOHL-BIEDENKOPF WIRE-

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TAPPING, MAY MUDDY THE WATER. PUBLICATION OF THE TEXT

OF THE CONVERSATION BY "STERN" DESPITE A TEMPORARY COURT INJUNCTION HAS GIVEN THE AFFAIR A NEW COMPLEXION. THE CDU (WHICH IS THREATENING FURTHER LEGAL ACTION AGAINST "STERN" FOR PUBLISHING THE TRANSCRIPT) AND THE GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY CRITICAL OF "STERN'S" ACTION. DISCLOSURE OF WHAT KOHL AND BIEDENKOPF ACTUALLY SAID ON OCTOBER 3 WOULD NOT APPEAR TO BE VERY DAMAGING TO KOHL AS UNION PARTY CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE. END SUMMARY

1. POLITICIANS AND THE PRESS CONTINUE TO BE OCCUPIED WITH THE DISCLOSURE THAT ON OCTOBER 3, 1974 A TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN CDU CHAIRMAN KOHL AND CDU SECRETARY GENERAL BIEDENKOPF WAS WIRETAPPED. IT IS NOW GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT US AUTHORITIES WERE NOT INVOLVED. THE EMBASSY'S DENIAL WAS CARRIED EXTENSIVELY BY THE WEST GERMAN MEDIA WHICH DISCUSSED AT SOME LENGTH THE DISCREPANCIES IN THE DOCUMENT SENT TO "STERN" MAGAZINE WHICH INDICATE THAT THE REPORT WAS NOT OF AMERICAN ORIGIN.

2. THE AFFAIR HAS TAKEN A NEW TURN THROUGH THE ACTION OF "STERN" IN PUBLISHING THE FULL TRANSCRIPT ON JUNE 19 DESPITE A TEMPORARY COURT INJUNCTION AGAINST PUBLICATION OBTAINED BY KOHL AND BIEDENKOPF. THE DOORMAN AT THE "STERN" PUBLISHING HOUSE REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE COURT INJUNCTION JUNE 17 (A GERMAN HOLIDAY), AND "STERN" CLAIMED LATER THAT THE JUNE 19 EDITION HAD ALREADY BEEN PRINTED AND DISTRIBUTED. "STERN" CHIEF EDITOR NANNEN CLAIMED THAT EARLIER BIEDENKOPF HAD TOLD HIM THAT THE TEXT OF THE CONVERSATION SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. BIEDENKOPF DENIED HAVING DONE SO AND SAID THAT NANNEN WAS LYING.

3. KOHL AND BIEDENKOPF HELD A JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE JUNE 18. KOHL ACCUSED "STERN," "SPIEGEL" AND THE TV SHOW "PANORAMA" OF ENGAGING IN A CONSPIRACY TO DISCREDIT THE CDU LEADERSHIP ON THE EVE OF THE CDU NATIONAL CONVENTION. HE CALLED THE PUBLICATION OF THE CONVERSATION AN ATTACK ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT OF PRIVACY AND SAID THAT SUCH A DEVELOPMENT AFFECTED EVERY CITIZEN, ALL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POLITICAL PARTIES AND EVERY DEMOCRAT. THE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN WAS ALSO CRITICAL OF THE "STERN" ACTION. HE STATED THAT THE CHANCELLOR AND THE WHOLE CABINET HAD ENDORSED JUSTICE MINISTER VOGEL'S VIEW THAT THE PUBLICATION OF A PRIVATE TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WAS A SERIOUS ATTACK ON CONSTITUTIONALLY PROTECTED RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUAL PRIVACY.

4. THERE ARE ANY NUMBER OF RUMORS AND THEORIES ABOUT WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WIRETAPPING BUT NO HARD EVIDENCE HAS EMERGED. OPPOSITION POLITICIANS EXPRESS THE VIEW THAT SPD SYMPATHIZERS WHO WANT TO DISCREDIT THE CDU WERE RESPONSIBLE. SPD POLITICIANS, ON THE OTHER HAND, HINT THAT IT WAS THE CSU WHO WAS INVOLVED IN AN EFFORT TO PREVENT KOHL FROM BECOMING THE CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE AND THUS OPEN THE WAY FOR A FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS CANDI-

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-05 SAJ-01 /064 W

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P R 201724Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0887

INFO USMISSION USBERLIN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

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DACY. THERE HAS ALSO BEEN SPECULATION (ON THE PART OF THE CDU SECURITY SPOKESMAN, AMONG OTHERS) THAT THE AFFAIR IS AN EASTERN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE'S DISINFORMATION EFFORT. TO DATE NO CLUES HAVE BEEN UNCOVERED WHICH LEAD TO THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON OR PERSONS.

5. THE PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF THE ACTUAL CONVERSATION WHICH ENABLED "STERN" TO SELL OUT A DAY EARLY, DOES NOT SEEM TO BE SO EXPLOSIVE AS TO BE VERY DAMAGING TO KOHL OR BIEDENKOPF. THE REVELATION THAT THE CDU PRESIDUM CONTAINED MEMBERS WHO WERE CRITICAL OF THE CDU CHAIRMAN CAN HARDLY COME AS A SURPRISE TO EVEN THE MOST CASUAL OBSERVER OF FRG POLITICS. WHAT EVOLVES IS A RATHER MUNDANE CONVERSATION BETWEEN TWO POLITICIANS WHICH IS UNLIKELY TO BE REMEMBERED VERY LONG.

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6. ON JUNE 19, "STERN" DISCLOSED THAT THE MAGAZINE HAD RECEIVED A LETTER ON JUNE 17 FROM A PRIVATE INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION CALLING ITSELF "THE INTELLIGENCE TECHNICAL TRAINING CENTER OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE." THE ORGANIZATION, ALLEGEDLY BASED IN DENVER, COLORADO, CLAIMS THAT IT HAS A WELL-GROUNDED SUSPICION THAT ONE OF ITS AGENTS WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE KOHL-BIEDENKOPF WIRE-TAPPING. CLAIMING TO HAVE AGENTS IN 14 COUNTRIES THE ORGANIZATION STATES THAT IT IS MADE UP OF HIGHLY TRAINED TECHNICIANS WHO HAD LOST THEIR JOBS WITH THE US GOVERNMENT (RIF'D) AND WORK IN GERMANY AS CIVILIANS FOR THE US ARMY OR EES. THE ORGANIZATION, THE LETTER STATES, HAS UNDERTAKEN 41 WIRETAPS IN THE FRG FOR A FEE OF DM 5,000 A MONTH EACH. THE LETTER SUGGESTS THAT THE PURCHASER OF THE TAPE, A PROMINENT PERSONALITY, MAY HAVE BEEN CARELESS IN STORING IT. THE STATIONERY USED, ACCORDING TO "STERN," HAD A US FORCES WATERMARK AND A PRINTED U.S. DEFENSE DEPARTMENT SEAL AND WAS MAILED IN MAINZ. IN SENDING OUT THE TICKER ITEMS TO THE NEWS SERVICES "STERN" SAID THAT ITS EXPERT BELIEVED THE US STATIONERY WAS FALSELY USED AND THAT THE MAGAZINE HAS TURNED THE LETTER OVER TO THE MAINZ PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE.

7. AT A NEWS CONFERENCE JUNE 20, THE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE AMERICAN EMBASSY TO FIND OUT IF SUCH AN ORGANIZATION EXISTED AND IF IT COULD HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE GERMAN WIRETAPPING. HE SAID THE EMBASSY WAS UNDERTAKING AN INVESTIGATION AND THAT AMERICAN AGENCIES UP UNTIL NOW DO NOT KNOW WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT, BUT HAVE DECLARED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO WORK TOGETHER WITH THE GERMAN AUTHORITIES TO FIND AN EXPLANATION. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT COULD NOT INVESTIGATE THE ORGANIZATION IN DENVER BECAUSE IT WAS ON AMERICAN TERRITORY BUT REPEATED THAT AMERICAN AUTHORITIES HAD EXPRESSED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE.

(WE ARE CHECKING OUT THE SO-CALLED "INTELLIGENCE TECHNICAL TRAINING CENTER OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE.")

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8. WE HAVE HAD VERY FEW INQUIRIES FROM THE MEDIA AND DO NOT PLAN TO MAKE ANY STATEMENT, AT LEAST BEFORE WE LOOK AT THE DOCUMENT. THE LETTER TO "STERN" APPEARS TO BE PHONY. AT THIS POINT IT WOULD NOT APPEAR THAT IT WARRANTS A PUBLIC EMBASSY RESPONSE.
CASH

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 20 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ellisoob
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